

Department of Homeland Security-Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Assessment

Jeffrey's Neck Road Flood Protection Project

Essex County, Ipswich, Massachusetts

FEMA intends to provide federal funding to the Town of Ipswich for the Jeffrey's Neck Road Flood Protection Project (Proposed Action) through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The Proposed Action will provide financial assistance to fund planning, design, and construction of recommended improvements to Jeffrey's Neck Road and Island Park Road in Ipswich, Massachusetts. The purpose of the Proposed Action is to mitigate flooding on sections of Jeffrey's Neck Road and Island Park Road. The Proposed Action is needed to lessen flood risk to human health, improved property, and public infrastructure; flooding on Jeffrey's Neck Road and Island Park Road causes the roadways to become impassable for both residents and emergency personnel and is the only means of egress for the Great Neck neighborhood.

Under the Proposed Action, the Town would raise the elevation of a 375-foot section of Island Park Road at the intersection with Jeffrey's Neck Road and a 3,900-foot section of Jeffrey's Neck Road from Island Park Road on the south to Northridge Road on the north to better accommodate elevated sea levels due to high tides, future sea level rise, and storm surge. Specific elements include:

- Elevate all sections of the road that are currently below 9 feet above sea level (ASL) to at least 9 feet ASL,
- Widen all sections of the road that are currently less than 26 feet wide to 26 feet,
- Install safety features (e.g., guard rails, signage, reflectors, flood gauge, etc.),
- Complete all work within the existing established roadway shoulders to avoid filling the salt marsh,
- Stabilize roadway shoulders with coir logs and native plantings except along the northernmost area on the west side of the road which would replace existing rip rap with appropriately sized riprap, and
- Keep existing utility poles and water lines in place and not relocate.

As required by the National Environmental Policy Act and federal regulations, FEMA evaluated the Proposed action and a No Action alternative. Three other alternatives including adding safety features and widening Jeffrey's Neck Road, but not elevating the road; constructing storm walls along both sides of Jeffrey's Neck Road between Island Park Road and Eagle Hill Road; and elevating Jeffrey's Neck Road to 13.0 feet ASL (i.e., 100-year Floodplain). These alternatives were dismissed as being either infeasible, not meeting the purpose and need or both.

The Draft EA is available for public comment and can be viewed and downloaded at: https://www.ipswichma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/14324/Ipswich-Jefferys-Neck-Rd-Flood-Protection-Draft-EA_508_20220308?bidId=. The Draft EA can be viewed in hard copy at the following location: Ipswich Town Hall - 25 Green Street – Ipswich MA 01938.

The comment period will end 15 days from the date of this legal notice publication, or distribution of print copies, whichever is later. Written comments can be emailed to David.robbs@fema.dhs.gov and eric.kuns@fema.dhs.gov or sent to FEMA Regional Environmental Officer, 99 High Street, Boston, MA 02110. If no substantive comments are received, the EA will become final and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be signed. Substantive comments will be addressed as appropriate in the final documents.